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29 October 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Review of SE-4, "Intelligence Implications of a Census and Verification of Armed Forces and Armaments," 12 May 1951

1. In connection with the current NSC policy review of the US position on disarmament, the Board of National Estimates has reviewed SE-4 and concludes that it is still generally valid. While a census and verification of armaments is not specifically included in the broad disarmament proposals now before the NSC, we assume that some such procedure would be an integral part of any detailed disarmament program.

2. In this event the intelligence implications would still be generally the same as when SE-4 was prepared, with the following qualifications:

a. With respect to disclosure in the nuclear field (para. 3a of Discussion), we believe that the USSR would now stand to gain more than the US from inspection of "current stockpiles." Given the advances in the state of the nuclear art the key nuclear intelligence target, for both the US and USSR, is now primarily the nature of weapons stockpiled (as an indicator of plans for use and of the evaluation of new production and delivery techniques). On the other hand, we continue to believe that the US would gain more intelligence than it would lose in an inspection system confined to the mining, processing, and production of fissionable materials (excluding any radical new developments), in view of the extent to which such information has already been made publicly available on the US program.

b. With respect to disclosure of non-nuclear research and development (para. 3d of Discussion), we believe that the USSR's greatest need is probably for data on our most sensitive and scientifically advanced projects. Since the USSR probably still lags somewhat behind the US in most of these fields (though less

"The Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee concurs in this view.

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so than in 1951), it would gain more than the US from inspection of such projects. On the other hand, Soviet intelligence on less sensitive projects is probably good, largely because so much information appears in our open literature. Thus the US would gain from equal disclosure of these projects. For example, US intelligence is wholly inadequate in the guided missile field, where a major Soviet threat is believed to be developing, while Soviet intelligence has probably gained a great deal from US open literature. Under these circumstances equal disclosure of all but the sensitive aspects of missile research and development would greatly benefit the US.

3. Since the USSR "would attempt to exploit any system of census and verification to its advantage..." (Conclusion 5 of SE-4), to minimize this risk we re-emphasize our conclusion that "each phase and within it, each step in the inspection process, should be carried out simultaneously in the US and USSR" (Conclusion 5d of SE-4), and that there should be absolute reciprocity at each stage.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

OVERMAN WENT

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"Is an example the current issue of American Aviation (25 October 1954) contains a surprisingly complete review of the US missile program, as compared with our extremely limited knowledge of the specific Soviet program as given in a recent national estimate, WFF 11-6-54.

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